

Message

From: Carey, Curtis [Carey.Curtis@epa.gov]
Sent: 2/16/2021 6:20:57 PM
To: Chu, Ed [Chu.Ed@epa.gov]; Tapp, Joshua [Tapp.Joshua@epa.gov]
CC: Cozad, David [Cozad.David@epa.gov]; Hayes, Scott [Hayes.Scott@epa.gov]; Bryan, David [Bryan.David@epa.gov]; Washburn, Ben [washburn.ben@epa.gov]
Subject: AWARENESS: Media Inquiry - EPA R7 response to Meade, NE, AltEn Ethanol Plant Release Assessment

For your Awareness:

Region 7 received a media inquiry regarding this weekend's AltEn Ethanol Plant Release.

MEDIA OUTLET: Wahoo Newspaper; Saunders County, NE

REPORTER: Elsie Stormberg

INQUIRY: A source informed me that the EPA's ERT team was on site over the weekend in light of the frozen pipe that burst on Feb. 12. I wanted to confirm this fact. Is this true?

EPA REGION 7 RESPONSE:

The Nebraska Department of Energy and Environment (NDEE) requested EPA Region 7 provide support for a release at the AltEn plant in Mead, Nebraska. EPA Region 7 in Lenexa, Kansas, sent emergency responders to Mead, NE, to work with NDEE and plant officials on the response. For additional questions and details about the event, please contact NDEE.

From: Elsie Stormberg <elsie.stormberg@wahoone newspaper.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2021 12:22 PM
To: Schaefer, Joe <Schaefer.Joe@epa.gov>
Subject: AltEn - Mead, Nebraska

Hi there,

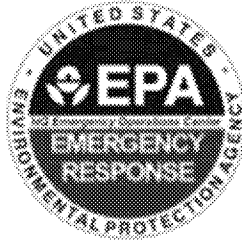
My name is Elsie Stormberg and I am a reporter from the Wahoo Newspaper in southeastern Nebraska. The AltEn ethanol plant falls within our papers coverage area and we have been working to cover the situation. A source informed me that the EPA's ERT team was on site over the weekend in light of the frozen pipe that burst on Feb. 12. I wanted to confirm this fact. Is this true?

Since you are in charge of information, I figured you may be able to help me. If not, would you be able to direct me to someone who could? I appreciate your help and look forward to your response.

Thanks so much,
Elsie Stormberg

BACKGROUND:

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EOC Spot Report: Region 7, AltEn Ethanol Plant Release Assessment, Update #1

MEAD, NE, NRC#1297838

US Environmental Protection Agency
Report Date: 2/13/2021
Last edited 2/16/2021 11:23 AM UTC

Overview: The Nebraska Department of Energy and Environment (NDEE) has requested assistance in responding to a release of materials from the AltEn ethanol facility storage tanks in Mead, NE. Material has reached drainageways from the site and migrated beyond facility property. The site had recently been ordered by NDEE to cease operations while regulatory compliance issues were being evaluated and addressed. Potential for involvement of listed hazardous substances is high due to the ethanol feed stock being seed grains treated with various pesticides, herbicides and/or fungicides. Previous sampling of waste by NDEE has identified elevated levels of various seed treatment compounds. The responsible party has been attempting to secure and contain the release.

Two locations off site were surveyed for release - Observation Points A and B. Facility personnel are blocking off the culvert at Observation Point B and will use this as their collection point for recovering material released from the facility. The material collected will be placed in each of 3 lagoons on the facility property. The facility has obtained an emergency exemption enabling them to reduce their freeboard to 18 inches in the lagoons, giving them approximately 7.2 million gallons of additional storage volume. The facility has committed to provide a written cleanup plan by Friday, 2/19/2021.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: NDEE has deployed staff to the scene to investigate the situation.

EPA Actions: A Region 7 OSC and START contractor deployed to the site on Saturday, February 13 and will assist with assessment of the release and determination of appropriate follow up response activities. The OSC and START returned to the site on 2/14/2021 to identify the extent of the release's flow from the facility. Samples were collected at Observation Points A and B. 22 liquid and 2 solid/sludge samples from 6 sample locations were collected along the flow path from the leaking tank to just past the end of the flow path at Observation Point B.

Media Interest: Medium

Media Links:

Local media interest is high.

<https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dtnpf.com%2Fagriculture%2Fweb%2Fag%2Fnews%2Fbusiness-inputs%2Farticle%2F2021%2F02%2F12%2Fpollution-fungicide-pesticide-wdg&data=04%7C01%7CCurry.Timothy%40epa.gov%7C7f5329e9b9fc43e88b8e08d8d03a9c95>

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served=0

The EPA will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed

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Curtis D. Carey, Ph.D.

Director, Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

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